



# The risen Christ is present in the toughest places

## Easter Message by Rev. Dr Robin Steinke

*Alleluia! Christ is Risen!  
Christ is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!*



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This familiar Easter Greeting in North American congregations fills each speaker and hearer with joy. The Lenten journey of prayer, reflection and discipline of adding practices to daily routines, like more prayer time, more bible study, or suspending practices of things that block our hearing and seeing God in the places God has promised to be present, culminate with the joy of this Easter refrain: Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

This earthshaking news is not only Easter joy but also fear. Have you wondered why the first words from the angel at the tomb are “Do not be afraid?” (Matthew 28: 5) Why does this good news that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead evoke such a fearful response? The Angel says “do not be afraid” and then says, “**come** and see, and **go** and tell”. Our text notes that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary left the encounter with the Angel “with fear and

great joy.” Not only does the Angel say fear not, but when Jesus encounters Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, Jesus also says “do not be afraid, **go** and tell and **go** and see”. Fear and joy are knit together in this Easter message when the women expect to find a tomb and instead encounter the living Christ.

Several years ago, on my way to an LWF meeting, I had a brief layover in Trinidad. I went to the city center for a few hours to explore. I wandered past a church with a large wooden hand painted sign which read: Church of all Miracles, worship every day at 7pm, miracles Sunday morning at 9:30. At first I thought it was funny that they predicted miracles on Sunday morning precisely at 9:30. Then I realized this congregation expected God to show up and expected something to happen on Sunday morning. I suspect there may have been a mixture of fear and joy on Sunday mornings.

Jesus entrusts the first proclamation of the good news of the resurrection to these two women, directs them to go and tell, trusting that when the rest of the disciples see the risen Christ it will turn their world upside down.

Just a few verses following this Easter proclamation, when the disciples went to where Jesus directed them, an English translation reads “they believed and some doubted.” This could lead the reader to assume those who believed were in one place and those who doubted were in another. The original text actually reads, “they believed and doubted”. Belief and doubt are part of the same experience when the disciples encountered Jesus. Belief and doubt are mixed in the same person wondering if what they are seeing can really be true.

During this Easter Season, if you are experiencing a mix of belief and doubt, fear and hope, joy and sadness, this Easter Proclamation is for you! We need each other in the global communion to remind us when we forget this good news that Jesus has been raised from the dead. When fear seems overwhelming, violence erupts, suffocating poverty abounds, the ravages of climate change destroy livelihoods and homes, racism, colonialism, and injustice lingers, the risen Christ is present in the toughest places and upends the status quo. Christ has overcome the final power of death and the evil one. This Easter proclamation is a word of hope which comes apart from your own effort, apart from how hard you try to follow Jesus. This Easter Proclamation is the power of the risen Christ over the most devastating circumstances including death itself. The risen Christ has the last word, and it is a word of restoration, renewal, and resurrection.

A few weeks ago, I was visiting a new mission congregation situated in the desert of the southwestern United States. It has among the most hopeful names for a congregation I have ever heard: River of Hope. What a powerful name for a congregation in the desert. The risen Christ is a river of hope in the desert, a promise that comes for you in the midst of all the traumas and heartaches you face. The global communion reminds us all of that promise when any one of us forgets. Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

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